

Minutes of the meeting of the Commercial Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Thursday, 18th June 2015 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor Richard Hobbs (Chairman)
Councillor Allen Alderson
Councillor Sue Austen (Substitute for Councillor Dupré)
Councillor Steve Cheetham
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Lis Every
Councillor Coralie Green
Councillor Mark Hugo
Councillor Andy Pearson
Councillor Dan Schumann
Councillor Stuart Smith

OFFICERS

Nick Ball – Neighbourhood Support Officer
Sally Bonnett – Infrastructure & Projects Officer
Allison Conder – Principal Community & Leisure Services Officer
Julie Cornwell – Partnerships Officer
Emma Grima – Corporate Unit Manager
Janis Murfet – Democratic Services Officer
Andy Radford – Interim Finance Support

I N A T T E N D A N C E

Councillor James Palmer
Mr Andy Couves – Sport England (Agenda Item 6)
Mr Tom Pinnington – The Sports Consultancy (Agenda Item 6)
Mr Pete Simpson – AFLS&P Architects (Agenda Item 6)

Prior to the commencement of business, the Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He extended a particular welcome to the new Members of the Committee, and to Emma Grima, Corporate Unit Manager, who had taken over as the Lead Officer for the Commercial Services Committee.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

5. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lorna Dupré.

It was noted that Councillor Austen would substitute for Councillor Dupré for the duration of this meeting.

6. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Pearson declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No 8, being the Secretary of the Ely Beet, Sports and Social Club.

7. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The Chairman congratulated the staff at Oliver Cromwell's House on being awarded a Tripadvisor Certificate of Excellence for 2015;
- Congratulations were offered to the Team Leader Tourism & Town Centre Services and her team for an excellent Food Fair. It was noted that "incredible" numbers of people had attended, and the event had made a profit this year;
- The proposed trip to visit facilities within the District was to be put back to September 2015 and thought would be given to possibly spreading it out over several months. It would be beneficial for Members to be able to speak to the people running the facilities.

9. **EAST CAMBS NEW LEISURE CENTRE – SIGN OFF RIBA C DESIGN REPORT**

The Committee received a report, Q12, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to consider and sign off the RIBA C Design Report prepared by Faithful & Gould.

Tabled at the meeting was the following revised recommendation:

- i. Note the findings of the public exhibition and consultation and instruct Officers to have further dialogue with National Governing Bodies and sports clubs on the key areas of feedback;*
- ii. Note the review of the design and site conditions and the projected construction costs;*
- iii. Approve the RIBA Stage C Design Report;*

- iv. *That the Chief Executive be instructed to initiate a tender process to confirm the build costs as soon as possible, utilising a Quantity Surveyor directly appointed by the Council;*
- v. *To rearrange the scheduled Funding Seminar until the implementation of recommendation 2.1(iv) and prior to consideration of the funding strategy by Full Council.*

The Principal Community & Leisure Services Officer introduced Tom Pinnington of The Sports Consultancy, Pete Simpson of AFLS&P Architects, and Andy Couves of Sport England. She said that there would be a short presentation regarding the Stage C Feasibility Report for the new leisure centre. A handout of Mr Pinnington's presentation was tabled at the meeting, and having been invited by the Chairman to address Members, he and Mr Simpson made the following points:

- i. The scope of the Stage C study included further defining of the cost plan for the facility mix based on Option 6 from the initial options appraisal study, and completing initial site surveys and investigations. Concept designs have been developed, funding and affordability have been reviewed and a procurement route recommended;
- ii. The preferred facility mix takes into account both current needs and future demand from the projected population growth. At the last Committee meeting, there had been questions regarding access to the site. The approach to the site would have parking to the right with spaces for disabled users adjacent to the building. The buildings would be environmentally sensitive with very good orientation to prevent glare, and public areas were to be very visible so as to entice people in;
- iii. The design has reduced the total floor area and circulation space required, with a central corridor providing access to all of the wet and dry facilities. There would be hoists that offer greater dignity to the user as they could be operated by the individual rather than having to have someone assist them. The learner pool would have a moveable floor that could come up flat, or be dropped down to a depth of 2 metres. The dry side would be a multi-use facility, constructed to Sport England standards. The dry change area would feed through to the 3G pitch. All plant would be located to the rear of the site;
- iv. The health & fitness suite (with 120 stations) would be located on the first floor, and look down on the pool;
- v. The front of the facility would look out towards the A10. With regard to the designs of the view towards the front entrance, they were at a very early stage and the aesthetics would be developed later on. The Oriel window would give a view of the cathedral;

- vi. The high level summary of capital costs included the figures from the initial Options Appraisal Study, the updated Stage C Cost plan, and a comparison column;
- vii. There had been a number of changes in the capital costs from the initial Options Appraisal Study. Increases included the addition of building cost inflation at 10%, the requirement for a bridge over the culvert on site, and an increase in parking provision on site. Reductions included the refinement of the design from 4,705m² to 4,235m², contingency had been reduced to 10%, and there had been a reduction in professional fee allowance from 12% to 10%. A lot of work had been carried out in reviewing the cost per square metre to bring it down to as affordable a level as possible.
- viii. The delivery programme was a key risk, as delays in delivering the project would cost approximately an additional £60,000 per month to the total project cost because of building cost inflation;
- ix. The top 5 risks were fairly common to all similar projects at this stage: building cost inflation, programme extending beyond planned opening date of December 2017, resource moves on from client or consultant team, Council approvals and changes to the design, and tender price exceeding the budget.

Councillor Cheetham asked Mr Pinnington if he was comfortable with contingency having been reduced. Mr Pinnington replied that he hoped none of the contingency would have to be spent on the project. Costs followed the design and specifications, and much time had been spent interrogating the costs; he still advised 10% contingency. Councillor Cheetham then asked if it was planned to try and retain resources to the end of the project, and the Chairman said this would be answered in a further session.

The Principal Community & Leisure Services Officer then summarised her report.

Members had been provided with copies of all the previous reports and minutes relating to the project and a site briefing had been held. The present report set out details of all the work that had been carried out to date. It was noted that RIBA C was a crucial stage in the development process as it included initial investigation of any site “abnormals” which may have an impact on the outline capital cost plan, and it established the building structure and the layout to be provided within that structure. Paragraph 4.2 detailed the site investigation works completed at RIBA C stage.

The Principal Community & Leisure Services Officer highlighted paragraph 4.13 of her report, which set out the key risks. She reiterated that work was continuing to develop the Council’s funding strategy for the project, and costs for the next stage of works for the internal and external resources that would be required to complete detailed designs, secure planning permission and procure a building contractor and operator. Officers would take proposals on these issues to Full Council for decision.

At this point, Andy Radford, Interim Finance Support, was invited to make comment and he informed Members that he had tried to ensure the scheme was affordable for the Council. The scheme was, he said, affordable but there was not much contingency and figures would be checked back to ensure the costs were correct.

The Chairman remarked that any delays would have cost implications for the Council and it would be essential to know the real costs. However, the project had been progressed further than ever before and he thanked the Leisure Team for all their efforts. He also thanked Sport England for acting as a critical friend to the Council.

Councillor Every also offered her thanks to Officers for their “fantastic” work, adding that this was a good example of the partnership approach.

There being no further comments or questions, it was duly proposed by Councillor Alderson and seconded by Councillor Every that the revised recommendation be accepted. When put to the vote,

It was resolved unanimously:

- i. To note the findings of the public exhibition and consultation and instruct Officers to have further dialogue with National Governing Bodies and sports clubs on the key areas of feedback;
- ii. To note the review of the design and site conditions and the projected construction costs;
- iii. To approve the RIBA Stage C Design Report;
- iv. That the Chief Executive be instructed to initiate a tender process to confirm the build costs as soon as possible, utilising a Quantity Surveyor directly appointed by the Council;
- v. To rearrange the scheduled Funding Seminar until the implementation of recommendation 2.1(iv) and prior to consideration of the funding strategy by Full Council.

10. **MOORINGS FOR SMALL BOATS, WATERSIDE, ELY**

The Committee considered a report, reference Q13, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to agree how the District Council’s moorings, currently used by small boats outside the Grand Central Restaurant, would be used and managed in the future.

The Chairman commented that it was nice to see the Partnerships Officer as she had recently left the Authority but had come back to complete this project. He knew this matter was dear to her and that she had worked so hard to bring it to fruition.

The Partnerships Officer then summarised the key points of her report, reminding the Committee of the background history to the issue.

Members noted that there were a number of options available to them:

- i. *Re-profile the riverbed and make the area available for cruisers and narrow boats* – this would cost around £2,300 and would require Environment Agency “Flood Defence” consent. Adding fendering would cost another £2,200. This option would provide an additional mooring for a cruiser or narrow boat and the silt would be unlikely to build up due to the natural movement and flow that larger vessels would generate. If this option was selected, the moorings would form part of the area covered by the new mooring management regime;
- ii. *Leave the area unchanged for small boats* – this option had no costs associated with it, but it would not provide any additional moorings for larger vessels. If this option was selected, the moorings could be leased for a fee and the area excluded from the new management regime. The leases would have to be very modest to be of any potential interest to small boat owners, and there would be costs to the Council for Officers to monitor and renew;
- iii. *The moorings could be included in the area covered by the new management regime* – this option would be difficult to operate as boat owners would be required to take their rowing boats out of the water every 48 hours, with no return for 48 hours;
- iv. *The area could be excluded from the management regime and left as it was, with the boats staying free indefinitely.*

The Partnerships Officer stated that recent consultation had highlighted the need for additional moorings, but the Council would lose at least 7 moorings by terminating its lease with the Environment Agency (EA). The option proposed in paragraph 2.1(i) of the report would mitigate to a small degree, the impact of giving up the EA lease. This option would also make the overall management of the area more straightforward, as the same conditions would apply to all of the moorings owned by the District Council.

Councillor Pearson expressed concern that the area might become congested and he suggested there should be a sign stipulating single mooring only. The Partnerships Officer replied that the EA encouraged double mooring and she was not sure how this could be enforced. However, this would be borne in mind when having dialogue with the EA.

Paragraphs 6.1 – 6.3 of the report set out the financial implications, but there was some confusion as to where the capital costs would be met from. Councillor Every suggested that in the absence of clarity, the Committee should support the Officer’s recommendation.

Councillor Green declared herself to be somewhat confused, and the Partnerships Officer responded by confirming that paragraph 2.1(i) was contingent on paragraph 6.1.

With regard to the issue of the capital costs, the Principal Community & Leisure Officer said it had been confirmed that the budget was to be made available through Asset Management. The Corporate Unit Manager said she would seek clarification on this and agree it in consultation with the Chairman. Whereupon,

It was resolved unanimously:

That the area be incorporated into the mooring management scheme (Free 48 hours, no return for 48 hours).

11. **EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AUDIT 2013**

The Committee received a report, reference Q14, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to consider the findings of the East Cambridgeshire Community Facilities Audit 2013.

The Infrastructure & Projects Officer summarised the main points of her report and reminded Members of the definition of a community facility:

“For the purposes of the audit, a community facility is defined as a building or space where community led activities for community benefit are the primary use and the facility is managed, occupied or used primarily by the voluntary and community sector.”

It was reported that the audit had found that there was currently a small surplus of community space in the District. 21 settlements had a surplus and 26 settlements had a deficit. Whilst 14 of the settlements with a deficit had no facilities that met the criteria, 8 had other indoor community facilities within the settlement. Only 6 settlements in the District did not have any indoor community facilities. The remaining 12 have a community facility that meets criteria but is too small for population based on the 111m² per 1,000 population standard. However, using the County Council's Research Group population forecasts, the current slight surplus across the District would decrease to a 19% shortfall of community space by 2031 if no new community facilities were provided.

Analysis of the quality of community facilities suggested that of those facilities visited, most were of a reasonable quality and only 8 did not meet the quality standard. However, almost half of the halls were not wheelchair accessible and the overall quality masked a number of investment needs.

Members noted that half the facilities that responded to a question about their financial position generally broke even, with a further 4 making a slight surplus. There were 10 facilities that operated at a loss and 6 which incurred a significant deficit. From the figures available, it appeared that those incurring a deficit were used by more people than those making a profit or breaking even.

The Audit looked at the viability of the facilities and there was an implication that the quality of a community facility as well as its usage might impact on the financial viability of the premises. Hall operators cited decreasing revenue streams and difficulties in funding building repairs and maintenance as major issues affecting the future of their facilities.

The Infrastructure & Projects Officer concluded by saying that the findings of the Audit would be used to inform the work of the Council's Planning, and Community & Leisure Services sections; it would also help to

inform the Parish Councils' priorities for their meaningful proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Councillor Every congratulated the Infrastructure & Projects Officer for a "huge and useful" report, saying that she was encouraged by the work with the parish councils and hoped that each would receive a copy of the Audit. The chairman concurred, adding that he believed they would find it a very useful document.

Referring to paragraphs 4.2 and 4.5 of the report, Councillor Alderson reiterated the importance of getting it through to the parish councils about using CIL money. The Corporate Unit Manager replied that this could be raised at the forthcoming Parish Workshop.

Councillor Schumann cautioned that some parish councillors might not recognise the importance of the Audit. He suggested that rather than send them the whole document, each parish should receive a copy of the section relating to itself.

The Chairman declared the Audit to be a wonderful piece of work, and Councillor Hugo agreed, saying it would be useful to go back in a few years time to see how the money had been spent. The Chairman suggested that an update be brought back to Committee every 2 years.

It was resolved:

- 1) That the findings of the audit be noted;
- 2) That the District Council's current standard for community provision (111 m² per 1,000 people) as set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions (March 2013) be retained;
- 3) That Officers be instructed to produce a Community Facilities Action Plan;
- 4) To commit to updating the audit every 5 years, conducting the next audit in 2018.

12. **EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE PARISH CONFERENCE**

The Committee received a report, reference Q15, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to consider the evaluation of two pilot Parish Conferences held in East Cambridgeshire.

The Neighbourhood Support Officer reminded Members that at the meeting of the Community & Environment Committee in March 2014, a recommendation was approved to have a Review Group to run a pilot multi-agency Parish Conference.

This decision was based on a recommendation from a Neighbourhood Panels Service Review Group. Members had agreed to cease Neighbourhood Panels at the end of the financial year 2013/14, and the cessation of this initiative, along with that of Shape Your Place in March 2015, meant there was a gap in and consequent need for a revised

community engagement tool. Consultation with the parishes favoured taking forward Parish Conferences as the preferred community engagement initiative.

The first pilot Parish Conference was held on 1st September 2014, and a second, led by the Community Safety Partnership with key support from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, was held on 2nd April 2015. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, suggesting that the Conferences were a useful and important engagement platform between parishes and public services.

The Neighbourhood Support Officer stated that Parish Conferences were relatively low cost to deliver. The first two events had been offset by contributions from Sanctuary Housing and Cambridgeshire Constabulary, and it might be possible to obtain future contributions to reduce the net cost to the Authority.

With regard to the financial implications, it was noted that a budget of £2,000 would be required from the District Council to deliver two Conferences per year, and this could be found from within the existing Community & Leisure Services budget.

The Chairman remarked that he and Councillor Every had attended the last Conference and had found it to be very good. He supported this initiative because it got the parish councils talking to each other, although he felt that there should be more input from the District Council.

It was resolved:

- 1) To note the findings from the evaluation of two Parish Conference pilots in East Cambridgeshire;
- 2) To instruct Officers to deliver two Parish Conferences in East Cambridgeshire each year.

13. **COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN 2015/16**

The Committee considered a report, reference Q16, previously circulated, which set out the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Plan (CSP).

The Neighbourhood Support Officer said that, due to time constraints, he would not go through the Action Plan in great detail, but he was more than happy to meet with Members outside of the meeting to answer any questions they might have.

He reminded Members that the Action Plan set out interventions where public services joined together to tackle crime and disorder in the District, and therefore there was a real need for Member buy-in for the Plan.

For the benefit of the new Committee Members, the Chairman said the CSP Action Plan was an ongoing item. If Members wished to ask questions, there was time to do so, but in the absence of any comments or questions,

It was resolved:

To note the priorities of the Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2015/16.

14. **COMMUNITY FUND GRANT SCHEME**

The Committee received a report, reference Q17, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to note the grants offered to The Word Garden, and Little Miracles, under Officer delegated powers.

The Neighbourhood Support Officer repeated his comment regarding time constraints, and again said that if Members wished to meet with him outside of the meeting to discuss the grants offered, they would be most welcome to do so.

The Chairman stressed the importance of this grant scheme, saying that sometimes parishes missed out, despite Officers doing what they could to try and help. He believed that a stronger dialogue was needed between the parishes and the District Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Alderson, the Neighbourhood Support Officer confirmed that only £272 was left in the budget for 2014/15, and this had been offered as a saving. There had yet to be an application made in respect of the Facilities Improvement Grant, so the budget of £45,000 for that scheme remained untouched at present.

Councillor Green informed the Neighbourhood Support Officer that she would like to take him up on his offer to discuss the grants. Whereupon,

It was resolved:

To note the following awards offered under Officer delegated powers:

- 1) £1,000 to The Word Garden;
- 2) £600 to Little Miracles.

15. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee considered the previously circulated Commercial Services Forward Agenda Plan.

Members were reminded that the date of the next Committee meeting had been put back to Tuesday, 28th July 2015.

It was resolved;

That the Forward Agenda Plan be noted.

16. **ASSET DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE – MINUTES**

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Asset Development Sub-Committee held on 12th March 2015.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Asset Development Sub-Committee held on 12th March 2015 be received and noted.

17. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item no's 15 & 16 because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1 & 3 Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as Amended).

18. **EAST CAMBS NEW LEISURE CENTRE – SIGN OFF RIBA C DESIGN REPORT - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

It was resolved:

That the exempt appendix to Report No. Q12 be noted.

19. **ASSET DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE – EXEMPT MINUTES**

The Committee received the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Asset Development Sub-Committee held on 12th March 2015.

It was resolved:

That the exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Asset Development Sub-Committee held on 12th March 2015 be received and noted.

The meeting closed at 6.45pm.